

# Zunis exercise to control diabetes

The following article appeared in a recent issue of "Perspective" magazine. Floyd Gibson brought it to Spilyay for reprinting.

When Bruce Leonard arrived at the Zuni Indian Reservation in Zuni, New Mexico in March 1983, he faced a formidable challenge--a spreading diabetes epidemic. Leonard, a public health educator with the Indian Health Service, hoped he could help the Zuni in their battle against the disease, which has run rampant in a number of Native American populations since the 1950s. By the early 1980s, one third of the adults in Zuni had developed Type II non-insulin-dependent diabetes, a rate seven times that of the non-Native American population in the United States.

Leonard, 44, a marathoner with a master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii, was convinced that the Zuni needed to bring the epidemic under control was exercise. He began his campaign by contacting a group of diabetic patients who were being treated at the Zuni Public Health Service Hospital and inviting them to an aerobics class that he was planning to conduct in a local high school gymnasium. About a dozen of the patients politely agreed to attend the class. Not one showed up. Leonard sat alone for an hour with his tape player and a stack of disco tapes.

Before his next scheduled class, Leonard called and wrote the patients. Again he received assurances that they would come. None did. Over a period of three weeks, Leonard sat by himself through six straight classes. "As you can imagine, I felt less useful than I wanted to be," he says. But he stuck to the schedule, aware not only of the Zuni's shyness but also of their traditional belief that a robustly rounded physique was a symbol of success, a sign that one's status had risen above the necessity for physical exertion.

But the Zuni were also conscious of their medical situation. Finally, for Leonard's seventh class, one overweight Zuni woman showed up. For an hour she endured his aerobics routine--"boot-camp calisthenics to disco music," he recalls. For the next class, two days later, the woman brought a friend. Soon there were a handful of exercisers, and over the months, the word spread that the women were losing eight and feeling better Zuni men began coming to the exercise sessions. Half a year after that somewhat hesitant start, Leonard had so many students that additional classes had to be added, taught by his wife, Carol. By the summer of 1984, Leonard had organized walking and running clubs, a weight-loss program, an Aerobics Challenge (in which point standings were charted for exercisers), a run-bike triathlon and a summer-long series of progressively longer road races. The umbrella title for the program was the Zuni Diabetes Project. As the participants worked themselves into shape, they learned new eating habits and gain control of their blood-sugar levels. Many Zuni were able to reduce or eliminate their diabetes medication.

The reformed diabetics became role models, and a cadre of Zuni have become aerobics instructors. Today, at the four-year-old tribal Wellness Center, headquartered in a wing of a high school, the gym is booked solid with exercise classes, and the weight-training equipment is in near constant use. The full-time staff of four health professionals monitors 12 certified Zuni instructors as they conduct 40 aerobics and circuit-training classes a week. Of the total population of 8,546 on the 400,000-acre Zuni reservation, nearly 1,800 individuals are now involved in exercise programs.

Many have become dedicated runners. Phillip Vicenti, a 38-year-old computer systems analyst, found out he had diabetes five years ago. The 5'6" Vicenti weighed 188 at the time and had never been much of an athlete, but he had heard many Diabetes Project success stories, so he enrolled and started running. At first he could only plod a few hundred yards. Today, 26 pounds lighter, Vicenti makes regular five-mile runs, and his blood sugar is back down to normal. "These days you see people running in Zuni who

you never thought you'd see running," Vicenti says.

This running movement takes on a particular irony because running was once an integral part of the Zuni culture, one of the tribe's most hallowed forms of self-expression. In a ceremonial event called the stick race, the best athletes once tested their spirit and stamina by running barefoot 25 miles or more through the sage and chaparral surrounding the Zuni pueblo while kicking small sacred sticks along the course. The sticks represented the toys of the tribal war gods, who were often depicted as tireless runners.

In previous centuries, the Zuni had always lived a vigorous, if sometimes precarious, existence. They hunted and farmed on the western slope of the Continental Divide in what eventually became New Mexico. They ate what they could kill and harvest: wild game, beans and other vegetables. Because there were periodic famines, their bodies developed the capability of storing above-average supplies of nourishment to tide them over the lean times.

When this century, particularly after World War II, came the widespread availability of store-bought, processed foods--new dietary choices such as cheeseburgers, soft drinks and ice cream. Hunting and farming were largely replaced by sedentary jobs such as jewelry-making. The genetic asset that had once helped the Zuni survive began working against them, and obesity became a common problem. It is also theorized that Native Americans and their genetics, can be traced to

Asia: as is true of other groups of Asian descent--the Maori of New Zealand and the Polynesians--the Zuni are prone to developing Type II diabetes. It was not long after the stick race had died out, in the late 1940s, that occurrences of adult-onset diabetes began to be noticed.

Even if their elders adopted a less strenuous life-style, the young people of the Zuni continued to run, as is attested by the cross-county state championship banners hanging in the Zuni High School gym--the Zuni boys' team having won the title 10 of the past 15 years, the girls' 8 of the past 10. But Leonard says that "after the students left the structure of the high school cross-country team, there was no community reinforcement of running, let alone any exercise."

Now, with the Diabetes Project, both are present. In 1990, more than 1,000 people--mostly Zuni, but also members of other tribes and non-Indians--took part in the Zuni Fitness Series, which runs one weekend very month from May to August. The final event of last year's series, a 25-mile relay run by five-member teams through the open range, drew 210 locals and visitors. A large Zuni crowd cheered the runners in a scene that would have made stick racers of previous generations proud, though perhaps perplexed by all the spandex outfits and Bart Simpson T-shirts.

The defending champions were the Zuni Tribal Runners, a team of past and present Zuni High cross-country stars--openly one of whom is a member of a diabetes-free family. To the delight

of the crowd, the first three Zuni runners built a 45-second lead over the Mesilla Valley Pacers, a team made up of runners from New Mexico State University. But the Pacers' Phil Apodaca, a former New Mexico Junior College standout who ran the fourth five-mile leg, closed fast on the Zuni's only woman runner, Dawn Eriacho, and gave the Pacers a lead they never relinquished. "I held him off for about a mile, then he sprinted past," said Eriacho with a smile. "He's kind of cute." The Pacers finished the 25 miles in 2:24, seven minutes ahead of the Tribal Runners. The spectators cheered the winners as enthusiastically as they did the locals. Ron Hamelin, then an assistant professor of health at New Mexico State, ran the second leg for the Pacers. He was as impressed with what he saw in the streets of Zuni as he was with his own team's performance. "You can see that the Zuni really care about themselves--much more than the general population," he said.

At the awards ceremony, competitors received medallions, plaques and trophies as recognition of their running accomplishments and their help in promoting a healthier Zuni future. Having run his five miles for the cause, Vicenti, who had not missed a Fitness Series race in the four years since his diabetes was diagnosed, shook hands with his friends and considered the way his life has changed. "I always worked with my dad, who's a rancher, and I always thought that at this age I'd be doing the same thing, just working," he said. "Now, here I am, running."

## Diabetics can have healthy feet

Diabetes is hard on feet. People with diabetes may slowly lose feeling in their toes, feet, and legs. Pretty soon, they can't tell when their feet get hurt or infected. With a bad infection, a person with diabetes could lose part of a foot or leg. These complications can be prevented by taking good care of your feet.

The Diabetes Program is holding a special foot clinic for patients with diabetes on Thursday, September 26, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you have diabetes, it is very important that you come to the clinic on that day to have your feet checked. If you have any questions regarding the foot clinic or about the Diabetes Program in general, please call Candace Reich, Diabetes Program Coordinator at the clinic at 553-1196.

### Why do I need to take special care of my feet?

After people have had diabetes for some time, they may have less blood flow to their feet and legs. When there is less blood flow, minor cuts or problems do not heal and can become very serious. Also, some people who have diabetes find that their feet become less able to sense heat, cold, and pain. When this happens, it is easy to hurt your feet or have a problem and not even know it.

### How can I take care of my feet?

The most important thing you can do is to look at your feet closely every day. By carefully looking at your feet, you can notice any problem early and take care of it. Take your shoes and socks off each time you see your doctor, so that the doctor can look at your feet.

### What should I look for when I check my feet?

Look at your feet after you shower or bathe. The places to look are on the bottoms, between your toes, and on the tops of your feet and toes. If you have trouble seeing your feet, try using a mirror or ask a family member to look at your feet for you.

The places on the bottom of the big toe and the soles of your feet get the most wear and tear from walking. Check these places for corns, calluses, blisters, or redness. These problems may be a sign that your shoes are rubbing or don't fit well. You may need to change shoe styles or wear different shoes.

Look between the toes for cracks, peeling skin, blisters, or a change in color. These breaks in the skin can lead to an infection. It is possible that you could develop an infection or other skin problems between your toes without feeling any pain at all.

Next look at the top of the foot and toes for calluses, redness, a change in color or ingrown toenails. An ingrown toenail happens when the soft skin around the nail grows over the edge of the toenail. As the nail grows, it harms the soft skin.

Finally, check the entire foot for dry places, especially around the heels.

### How can I take care of the skin on my feet?

Wash your feet with a mild soap and warm water. Test the water with your wrist or elbow first so that you don't burn your feet. Pat your feet dry. Be sure to dry between your toes. If the skin of your feet is dry, rub on a cream or lotion. Do not put lotion between your toes as this may lead to an infection. Avoid using rubbing alcohol on your feet. This may dry the skin even more. If your feet sweat a lot, dust on a light coat of talcum or baby powder.

If you have corns or calluses, rub them lightly with a pumice stone each day. You can buy a pumice stone at any drug store. Avoid corn removers or cutting corns or calluses with a knife or razor blade. This can lead to an infection. You can pad the corn to ease the pressure until it heals.

### How should I cut my toenails?

Cut your toenails to follow the shape of your toes, and even with the end of your toes. Then file them carefully to get rid of rough ends. Do not cut your toenails so short that the end digs into the skin. Avoid using sharp objects to dig under the nails. If your nails are too thick, split or crack when they are cut, you may want to have your feet cared for by a foot doctor (podiatrist).

Your nails will be soft and easiest to cut right after a bath. Be sure that you have good light when you cut your toenails. If you have poor vision or you aren't able to cut your own nails, a podiatrist can care for your feet, or you can ask someone to help you.

### Are there special shoes or socks for people with diabetes?

Usually, there is no need to buy special shoes and socks. Shoes need to support, protect, and cover your feet. Avoid going barefooted and use common sense about wear-

ing sandals. Choose the best pair of shoes for each day's activities.

Shoes and socks that fit well will protect your feet. Buy new shoes carefully. Choose them for their fit, not their size. Leather shoes that are long enough to allow the toes to wiggle are best. Try on both shoes before buying, to be sure that they both fit.

Break in new shoes slowly. Wear new shoes for one or two hours a day at first. Watch for any red areas which can lead to a blister.

Shake out your shoes, and then feel inside with your hand before you put them on. Be sure that nothing is inside that could hurt your foot.

Wearing socks with your shoes is another way to protect your feet. Cotton or wool socks allow your feet to breathe. Tight elastic tops on hose or tight garters can cause less blood to flow to the feet and legs. If your feet are cold, wear warm socks instead of using hot water bottles or heating pads. These can burn your feet without your knowing.

### What should I do if I hurt my feet?

If you bump or hit your feet, look at them for any sign of injury. If you are hurt, stay off your feet as much as you can. Use mild soap and water to clean any cuts or scrapes. If you need a bandage, wrap sterile gauze around the cut area or use a bandaid. Be sure to take the bandaid off carefully so you don't tear your skin. Check the area each day to be sure it is healing. Call your doctor or foot doctor for any major injuries, signs of infection, or if a cut does not heal in one week.

Avoid wart removers, iodine or other harsh products. These can lead to burns and infections. Opening blisters yourself can also lead to an infection. Use only prescribed medicine on your feet and legs.

## COCC adult education...

# Numerous classes scheduled for fall

Registration begins September 9, at the COCC office for the 1991 fall schedule. There will also be a special Saturday registration September 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Using Lotus**--Create spreadsheets, formulas and graphs for family, office or business budgets. For beginners. September 17 thru October 29, 7 to 9 p.m., Tuesdays, Old Boys Dorm. Instructor is Richard Candland. Cost is \$30.00. Section 4515.

**Playing Guitar**--Learn instrument tuning, basic open chords and songs alone or in a group. Great fun! Discover your hidden musical talents! Famous guitar great "Hot Licks Joel Munn" will take you through chording basics. September 17 thru October 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesdays, Senior Center. Cost is \$13.50. Section 4475.

**Office Skills II**--Sharpen your

professional secretarial skills in filing, proof reading, greeting the public and more! Many activities are planned to help you become a first class secretary. September 17 thru October 29, 7 to 9 p.m., Tuesdays, Old Boys Dorm. Instructor is Kathy Waldon. Cost is \$21.00 plus approximately \$12.00 for filing packet. Section 4495.

**Getting Your License**--Prepare yourself to pass the Oregon Driver's test. Includes rules of the road and safe driving skills. Great for first time drivers, or those who want to get their license again after an absence. September 19 thru October 10, 7 to 9 p.m., Thursdays, Old Boys Dorm. Instructor is Jeff Sanders. Cost is \$12.50 plus book approximately \$9.00. Section 4455.

**Beginning Word Perfect 5.1**--Word processing on an IBM com-

puter. Learn to enter text, save, print, retrieve files, and more. For beginners. Should have some typing skills. September 19 thru October 31, 6:30 to 9 p.m., Thursdays, Old Boys Dorm. Instructor is Mike Lofting. Cost \$35.25. Section 4520.

**More Word Perfect 5.1**--Intermediate to advanced features of Wordperfect including formatting, search, replace merge, mailing labels, etc. IBM computers used. September 18 thru October 30, 6:30 to 9 p.m., Wednesdays, Old Boys Dorm. Instructor is Kathy Marston. Cost is \$35.25. Section 4510.

**Golf I**--Wrap up the season with lessons to improve your all around game. Beginners welcome! Lots of practice time on the course. Taught by Kah-Nee-Ta club pro Ed Hershey. September 18 thru October 23, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Wednesdays, Kah-Nee-Ta Course.

Some clubs and balls available. Cost is \$23.50. Section 4535.

### CREDIT CLASS

**Technical Writing (WR 221)**--3 credits. Fulfills general education requirements. Prepares students to write technical or professional correspondence and reports. Prerequisite: WR 121 or permission of instructor. September 17 thru December 3, 1:30 to 4:10 p.m., Tuesdays, Social Hall, Community Center. Cost is \$78.00 plus approximately \$35.00 for books.

### ADULT LEARNING CENTER

Stop by the Old Boys Dorm to study for your GED, or just to brush up your basic reading, writing or math skills. Classes are held mornings and evenings: Mondays and Wednesdays 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.; or Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 9:00 to 12:00 noon. Please call the COCC office at 553-1428 for more information.

# The old days

Warm Springs Boarding School, Oregon.  
Report of Horace G. Wilson, Supervisor  
March 24, 1913.  
Section 17.

### Employees:

The efficiency reports of employees at the Warm Springs Agency and Schools are enclosed herewith.

### Section 16.

### Office work:

There have been two clerks at this agency, one at \$1,000 per annum and the financial clerk at \$720 per annum. There has recently been allowed another clerk at \$720 per annum. The financial clerk is paid from school funds.

The office records are being properly kept. I instructed the force in certain methods of filing letters, records, and accounts, which are now being followed and will put the office records in better shape.

Mr. Urban G. Robbins is financial clerk. His work is very satisfactory.

Mr. George W. Robbins is clerk. Mr. Robbins is a very hard worker and trust-worthy. He has been in the Service several years and should be promoted. I recommend that Mr. Robbins be promised to the position of superintendent of some school or agency paying a salary of \$1400 or \$1500.

The Superintendent here very much needs a stenographer for the position of clerk which has been recently authorized at \$720 per annum on account of many hearings to determine heirship that now have to be held and also various correspondence and other office work.

### Section 18.

### In General:

Quite a number of the Indians called on me and stated that part of their reservation had been taken away by an erroneous survey. They claim that the north boundary of the reservation is not located where it should be but that the northern boundary is several miles north of where it is now. The weather conditions were not so that I could examine this boundary question and I recommend that the Superintendent be directed to take up this boundary matter and discuss it thoroughly with the Indians and go over the boundary lines for the purpose of seeing whether or not the Indians have any just claim.

The allotments on this reservation appear to have been very poorly surveyed. The Indians are continually complaining that they do not know where their allotments are. Many of them think that their land is in one place when in reality it is in another. Very few allotment stakes are now in evidence and it is a very hard matter to properly locate the allotments. I recommend that a special allotting agent be detailed to go to this reservation for the purpose of re-establishing allotment corners.

There Superintendent of the Warm Springs Reservation, Mr. Gilbert L. Hall, is a very good man. He has only been in the Indian Service since September, 1912, but was formerly in the Philippine Service for about nine years. He is taking hold of the Indian Service work very readily and is making a good Superintendent. He has, in my opinion, too many duties to perform and should be given assistance, for example; he has been holding hearings to determine the heirship of deceased allottees and has had to do the typewriting work himself as he had no stenographer. He has also to look after the immediate needs of the Warm Springs Boarding School. The position of clerk at \$720 per annum has recently been allowed. If a competent stenographer is appointed to this position, this will help him out in his office work but he should have some one in immediate charge of the boarding school. I believe that the position of principal teacher or disciplinarian should be authorized July 1, 1913, for this school. This would give Supt. Hall more time to be out of work on the reservation looking after the welfare of the Indians.

I recommend that the salary of the Superintendent be increased from \$1600.00 per annum to \$2,000.00 per annum, effective July 1, 1913.

Dr. Charles J. Laffin, physician, is doing excellent work at the school and on the reservation; I recommend that the salary of physician be increased from \$1100.00 per annum to \$1400.00 per annum.

Very respectfully,

HGW/P.

Supervisor.